THE LIBRARY, ST. CHARLES SEMINARY, CARTHAGENA, OHIO

SEE THEIR FACES
—John Cogley

THE

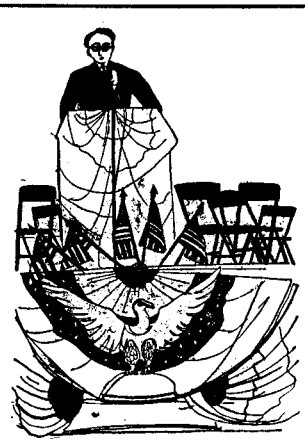
Commonweal

The Conservative Vision

by Frederick D. Wilhelmsen

Challenge to Conservatives

by Geoffrey Ashe



THE DICE ARE SLIGHTLY LOADED

by John C. Cort

lume LXII, No. 12 June 24, 1955 Twenty Cents

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CANDLES, particularly tall ones on the gradines of an altar, at times seem perversely resistant to all attempts to light them. When last extinguished, wicks may have been pressed into the molten wax . . . snapped off close to their bases . . . or cocked at awkward angles. In any event, time drags and exasperation mounts as the altar boy or sacristan seeks to effect combustion with the tip of his taper lighter.

Will & Baumer, following a 100-year tradition of working closely with the Clergy in all matters pertaining to candles, found a solution to these difficulties with a different type of candle lighter. Instead of a taper, *propane gas* supplies the flame. The pencil-shaped jet, adjustable to a length of three inches, is of such high heat intensity that the wick, regardless of condition or position, is easily and quickly ignited.

Will & Baumer branch offices, dealers and representatives are so conveniently located throughout North America that demonstration of the gas lighter or expert help on any candle requirement is immediately available to members of the clergy.

The Pioneer Church Candle Manufacturers of America

In Our Second Century of Fine Candle Making

Purveyors to the Vatican by Appointment

Syracuse Boston New York
Chicago Montreal Los Angeles

Will & Baumer
CHURCH CANDLES

THIS WEEK

Week by Week 291

The Conservative Vision
by Frederick D. Wilhelmsen 295

Challenge to Conservatives
by Geoffrey Ashe 299

The Dice Are Slightly Loaded
by John C. Cort 302

See Their Faces
by John Cogley 304

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 305

Communications 305

Books 307

THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

Editor
EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editor
WILLIAM P. CLANCY

Contributing Editors
PHILIP BURNHAM
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES
WILLIAM PFAFF

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1955, in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685.

U. S. and Canada, $7.50 a year. Foreign, $9.50. Single copies 20¢

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Commonweal

week by week

THE PEOPLE: YES AND NO

OUR century has been an age of disenchantment. Great hopes have died in the charnel-house of history—among them the hope of easy utopias to be secured through universal education and suffrage. We have learned that "the people" may prove to be a monster; that majorities can impose a tyranny more terrible than absolute monarchs ever devised. The concept of democracy itself has come under wide attack in this country, and "liberal" has been made a term of abuse. This nation, we are reminded more and more frequently, is not a "Democracy" at all, but a "Republic." Few write these days in the tradition of popular democracy.

Mr. John C. Cort apparently is one of the few. In this issue of The Commonweal he raises the issue of perfecting our democracy through widening the extent of popular representation in the United States Senate. Reminding us that eighteen Senators represent one-half of the American population and seventy-eight Senators the other half, and that thirty-six Senators from the eighteen smallest states represent fewer voters than the two Senators from New York, he expresses his regret that "there doesn't seem to be very much that anyone can do about this situation." "It doesn't make much sense any more," he says, "but we're stuck with it."

Thus, almost in passing, Mr. Cort raises again, in classically "liberal" terms, a question which is basic to the structure of our society. The question is this: to what extent does the strengthening of democracy depend on widening the direct representation of the people in all aspects of government? Or, put another way, to what degree is government made more responsible by increasing the number of those who share directly in its decisions? What, properly, are the functions of the popular will in a free society?

These are questions that recently received a thorough analysis in Walter Lippmann's *The Public Philosophy*. Mr. Lippmann is among those who, through the years, have grown disenchanted with the type of popular democracy usually associated with "liberals" in this country. Rather than constantly widening the area of popular representation in government, Mr. Lippmann would narrow it. He thinks that the great failures of the Western world in this century can be ascribed to a dangerous intrusion of "democratic" influence into all phases of government, so that statesmen have come to seek not that which is wise but that which is popular:

"With exceptions so rare that they are to be regarded as miracles and freaks of nature," Mr. Lippmann says, "successful democratic politicians are insecure and intimidated men. They advance politically only as they placate, appease, bribe, seduce, bamboozle, or otherwise manage to manipulate the demanding and threatening elements in their constituencies." The current sickness of democracy, he insists, is an excess of democracy which makes free governments incapable of governing effectively. The cure, he thinks, must be to re-emphasize the *limits* of popular influence on the councils of the nations.

THUS, in terms of practical power, the liberal-conservative issue is drawn. And on such a question as the desirability of making the Senate more "democratic" this magazine would adopt a "conservative" position. Like Mr. Lippmann, we believe that the genius of our system rests on a careful system of checks and balances rather than on a universal rule of "the-more-democracy-the-better." Like him, we think that unlimited democracy can prove to be freedom's deadly enemy, and that one reason for the liberals' current disrepute is their past failure to recognize the dangers of unordered popular power.

One of the chief values of the United States Senate, for example, is that it can function relatively free from direct pressure by the electorate. The Senate serves as a check on the pressure-conscious House of Representatives: where the House, because of its constitution, can seldom risk

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

being unpopular, the Senate can. The House must be immediately responsive to the demands of the hour; the Senate, ideally, can ignore them, attending, instead, to the long-range interests of the body politic.

No man in modern American history, for example, was more conscious of the Senate's unique, non-popular role in democracy's life than the late Robert A. Taft, and it was he, a conservative, who spoke out wrathfully against drafting railroad strikers into the army at a time when many liberals, responsive to the passions and pressures of the hour, were ready to accede to Mr. Truman's dangerous request. There will undoubtedly be other hours in the future of the Republic when freedom's security will depend on the existence of a legislative body not immediately responsive to popular demands, for in times of crisis "the people" may be their own worst enemy.

We have written before that since liberalism's early dreams are finished, this generation's task should be to redeem liberalism's work by supplying it with an adequate vision of man and society. This vision does not consist in return to naive faith in "popular" government, but in learning from modern history the limits of popular power.

"I am a liberal democrat and have no wish to disenfranchise my fellow citizens," Mr. Lippmann warns, even as he makes his critique of excessive democracy. We have no wish to disenfranchise our fellow citizens either, and we continue to believe wholeheartedly in the perfection and extension of our democracy—but extension in conformity with tested constitutional precedures, in line with our knowledge of the dangers of popular power when it is misapplied. We reject any rule of thumb which, magically, makes government better to the extent that it is more responsive to the popular will of the hour. That way lies not freedom, but tyranny.

NEXT WEEK

ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN writes of Soviet man today as revealed in recent novels and periodical literature.

"Literature carries much more political weight in the ideologically pregnant political scene east of the Rhine than in the western domains of Christendom. . . .I cite as examples the works of Griboedov and Chernyshevski; Gogol, Dostoevski and Turgenev; Saltykov-Shchedrin and Tolstoi; Gorki and Bunin. Clearly these writers have affected the Russians even more profoundly than the dry and factual writings of their theorists. Bazarov, Shatov, Prince Myskin, Alexander I and the other heroes of their novels became living symbols, taking on flesh and blood in the imagination of the reader. Yet librarians in the West often frown on readers who borrow 'nothing but fiction.' "

CHANCE FOR IMPACT

THE saying that nothing succeeds like monopoly could hardly be better illustrated than by utilities in the United States. They purvey a commodity essential for home, farm and factory. They appear to enjoy an ever-expanding market. It is hardly surprising that utilities rate high among blue chip stocks and bonds and comprise an important sector of many well-planned investment portfolios of individuals, foundations, pension funds, endowments and insurance companies. Financially speaking, utilities seem mighty solid.

Of course, utility companies hardly go their profitable way throughout the land with only the force of public opinion to restrain them. There are regulations, established rates and commissions. There are also the yardsticks provided by TVA, various municipal power and light companies, the farmers' cooperatives of REA etc. In the parts of the country where these latter operate there are people exercised about the extent of the private profit from the distribution of a commodity on which everyone is dependent. Elsewhere this and other aspects of the electric power issue appear to make little public impact—not even the related atomic power question.

However, there seems to be a new upsurge of general interest in the question. The Democrats are coming more and more to recognize that power policy represents their biggest single difference with the Eisenhower Administration (although the Republican position is supported by some leading Democrats). Mr. Truman dramatized the issue in no uncertain terms in a recent campaign speech for Senator Morse of Oregon. So has the House Appropriations Committee by turning down President Eisenhower's request for certain funds for the Dixon-Yates contract and recommending instead a like appropriation for expanding TVA.

Another onslaught on the public apathy comes from a different quarter. There is great controversy in New York State over the development of Niagara power. Ex-governor Dewey, who knows how to dramatize things, is a leading witness for the advocates of public over private power development. New York Democrats are split on the matter, with Senator Lehman and Franklin Roosevelt, Jr.,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opposing the private development sympathies of Governor Harriman and Mayor Wagner. The fur should fly, and perhaps at long last the voting public will take some interest in a question that concerns them more than they realize.

REQUIREMENTS OF A BASTION

TODAY, as at the beginning of the cold war, the defense of the peoples of the free world involves not only the United States but also a strong Germany and a strong Japan. All the local wars, policy shifts, proposals and agreements and other developments of the postwar interval have not changed that. The Germany of Dr. Adenauer still has it problems but there is no denying its recovery or its regained strength. Japan, on the other hand, is a much more uncertain quantity.

In fact, it would seem that the economic pressures that were utilized by the war lords before Pearl Harbor to justify aggression have become more intense. It is putting things mildly simply to state that Japan has by far the greatest concentration of population per acre of arable land of any country in the world—or that ninety million people are crowded into four islands (one-sixth of whose land can be cultivated) the size of the state of Montana. Despite a tragically high abortion rate and widespread resort to birth control, the pressure of population on food supplies continues to increase.

Moreover, the Japanese islands have been greatly restricted in the operation of their fisheries since the war. Their fishermen have encountered interference in Chinese, Korean, Russian and disputed waters. As a result, one of the principal sources of that nation's nourishment has been greatly curtailed.

When a nation's food is insufficient there remain but two possibilities: emigration or increased exports to pay for food imports. Japan is prevented from encouraging or subsidizing emigration on any effective scale by various national barriers. Largely unsettled and undeveloped Australia, which is relatively nearby, will accept no Japanese at all, while the United States will take only a trickle. There are various barriers in other lands. The chances of new homelands for, say, some four million "excess" Japanese are extremely limited.

The only large-scale measure remaining is to increase export trade—which is but two-fifths of what it was in the hard-pressed prewar era. This is not proving easy. To supplant China, the principal former market, is a formidable task. Low purchasing power continues to be too widespread in Southeast Asia for those lands to be of much help. The same is true of most countries in Latin America. Possibilities in Europe are limited. That leaves only the United States. But imports of the Japanese goods on the scale required would make great inroads on the domestic market for our textile and other industries.

From an American point of view, then, may it not be said that it is impossible for the Japanese to replace their traditional Chinese market? That would lead to going along with Senator George, who favors restoration of Sino-Japanese trade in non-strategic goods over accepting Japanese textiles in such quantities as seriously to threaten the American textile industry, which of late years has grown so in the South.

But if we return to the consideration with which this comment began, would restored Sino-Japanese trade relations prove to be enough to meet a situation of such giant proportions? They could help, but a major increase in Japan's American markets would also be needed. And at the same time must there not also be an increase in Japanese food production, plus large-scale emigration, too? A bastion in the Far East remains indispensable. To erect and maintain it is no child's play.

"A PASSION FOR REFORM"

DEMOCRATS in the Senate recently upset President Eisenhower's plans—perhaps just to show they could still do it. Up to now, it has to be admitted, Mr. Eisenhower has been enjoying the best of two worlds. Although Republican support on key Administration issues is lower than it was last year, it is still very substantial. And Democratic backing for Eisenhower measures is up eighteen per cent over 1954. (Significantly, the Democrats have supported Administration foreign policy measures sixty-nine per cent of the time, compared with a GOP record of fifty-two per cent.) On two recent domestic issues, however, the minimum wage law and housing legislation, Democrats in the Senate refused to go along with Mr. Eisenhower's requests.

The debate on raising the minimum wage for workers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act produced more arguments over timing and amount than over the basic principle involved. Apparently, almost everyone now accepts the idea of a minimum wage—and that is progress. On the technical level, there is plenty of room for argument. The unions and Northern liberals wanted an increase from 75 cents to $1.25. The Administration asked for a boost to 90 cents. The Senate actually voted $1.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We are not at all adamant on the matter, but $1 sounds like a good compromise figure to us. Too sharp an increase at one jump could imperil the whole idea. An increase to 90 cents would provide for the boost in living costs since the original figure was established, but that is about all. The $1 figure, on the other hand, would allow for the jump in the cost of living in recent years and would also provide a reasonably substantial increase in real minimum wage standards without the dangers attached to too sharp a boost.

The issues involved, it should be noted, are not at all academic. An increase in the minimum wage to $1 would mean an immediate jump in salary for more than two million workers. Now the matter is up to the House, and for our part we would like to see the Representatives keep the figure set by the Senate and go on to examine the possibility of extending the coverage of the law to more workers than are now provided for.

The second rebuff the Senate handed Mr. Eisenhower was on housing legislation. The Administration asked Congress to authorize 35,000 units of public housing for two years—total requested, 70,000. Majority Leader Johnson went to work quietly, however, and in the end he came up with one of the biggest surprises of his undramatic tenure. By a vote of 44-38, the Senate passed a bill providing for a minimum of 200,000 and a maximum of 800,000 units over four years.

The difference between what the Administration asked for on this matter and what it received was substantial. We favor the higher figure very strongly; such legislation is necessary if America's cities are to have any hope at all of checking the growth of slum neighborhoods. But the prospects are not good; the bill is likely to have a bad time in the House, where anti-public housing sentiment is stronger than it is in the Senate.

Most of the legislators who will vote against the housing measure are men of good will. The trouble, we think, is that they simply do not realize what bills like these mean in the lives of hundreds of thousands of silent, unknown Americans. The problems stay on paper; the legislators feel no sense of urgency.

When Abbé Pierre, France's priest of the homeless, was in this country recently, the *Indiana Catholic and Record* printed an interview with him which presented some of his opinions on current problems. His remarks had, we think, a real bearing on issues like the minimum wage law and public housing legislation. "The tragedies in today's world," Abbé Pierre said, "do not result from the dishonesty of those who govern and administer it. What the authorities lack is a bitter personal knowledge of misery. They have, instead, only an intellectual, technical, and scientific understanding of it. But what is necessary is the kind of intimate and crushing experience of misery that unleashes a passion for reform."

For most people in comfortable circumstances, it is hard, if not impossible, to have the "bitter personal knowledge of misery" Abbé Pierre has acquired from living the life of the poor. But it should be possible for everyone who is to speak or vote on measures like the minimum wage law or public housing legislation to take a house-by-house tour of America's slums. If that were done, we would feel much more comfortable about the chances for passage of both measures.

CHILDREN'S TV

NORMALLY, we leave television criticism to the specialists, on the theory that we have troubles enough of our own. Lately, however, there has been considerable publicity given to the subject of violence in mass communications, and a recent column by John Crosby set us to thinking on the subject as it affects TV.

Mr. Crosby was bold enough to wonder—in type, at that—if the networks understand what children really want. His own children, he reported, prefer non-violent shows like cartoons. And to buttress his position, he pointed out two programs which have quietly stolen the audiences of more pretentious, and much louder, efforts.

The first program consists entirely of old "Our Gang" comedies, which the children of this generation seem to enjoy just as much as those of the last. These comedies have their faults, but, as Mr. Crosby points out, they are not violent. The second show with a big following among children is an item called "Tinker's Workshop." This program, which Mr. Crosby thinks may be the gentlest show on the air, is on at the same time as NBC's "Today" and CBS's "The Morning Show," both of which are major productions costing lots of money. Yet it has, he reports, twice the rating of both of them put together. The show is simple, it is quiet, it is creative in a way children can understand, and they love it.

All this had the ring of truth in it for us. Just to make sure, we ran a hasty, completely unscientific poll among the children of those editors who are fathers. Their vote goes along with Mr. Crosby's analysis; the results showed a marked preference for quiet shows over noisy ones and for gentleness over violence and mayhem. As usual, Mr. Crosby seems to have something there.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Conservative Vision

"AN EXPLORATION OF THAT VISION MAY GO FAR TOWARD SUGGESTING A CURE FOR THE CRISIS OF THE WEST"

FREDERICK D. WILHELMSEN

THE spirit of abstraction is abroad in the world and it threatens to drown us all in violence and barbarism. This world, lurching drunkenly on the verge of self-destruction, is the backdrop for the present-day discussion in our country between liberalism and conservatism. In the light of the above, the discussion seems sometimes to be the irresponsible play of children who do not know the night is upon them. Thus it must appear to ironic skepticism, but the conservatism of despair is forbidden a Christian by the apostolic injunction that he harden himself in hope. He may expect the worst: he is bound to hope for the best.

But hope without charity is a contradiction. Unless we close ranks we are doomed. Conservatism—in simple justice if not in charity—must cease blaming latter-day liberalism for all the evils of the times; conservatism must respect the historic role of liberalism as the social conscience of the age. In turn, liberalism must cease sneering at conservatism for its failure to come to grips with the concrete issues of the day: we conservatives do not hold the power; if we did, the world would dance to a different tune. Liberalism must cease its weary preaching: it does no good to advise those of us who, in spirit, are of the party of tradition to exorcise our illusions and face the modern world. We face the modern world every day and we have lived our whole lives in it: it confirms us the more in the vision which is ours.

Since the conservative vision defines the modern temper by opposition and contrast, an exploration of that vision may go far toward suggesting a cure for the crisis of the West.

We see a world wherein science, liberated from traditional life, has been permitted to go its own way and build a new universe which is intolerable to the very psychic structure of man. We see a world wherein art, divorced from the living culture of the people, has fashioned an esoteric dream foreign to the faith and aspirations of Western man. We see a world wherein the state, freed from the religious convictions of the nation, has pushed its own nature to the limits of totalitarian slavery. We see a world compounded of abstraction and violence.

There is no doubt that this process of separating the part from the whole has resulted in enormous change and considerable advance. Science and poetry, technics and mythology, the secular and the sacred, have come into the purity of their own essences within the past centuries. They have done so, however, only by trampling upon the corpse of what was once a traditional society within which all things coalesced in the unity of historic existence. Mr. Russell Kirk has written eloquently of "the broken cake of British custom." But the cake of custom was broken all over the West and the world has grown grayer for it. Modernity has been one long attempt to rationalize and isolate, one from another, the diverse elements that go to make up corporate existence. Modernity is man's disenchantment of the real. So far as I can see, conservatism makes no sense except when seen as the party of enchantment.

THAT conservatism represents enchantment has been missed in our day by many conservatives, as well as by their critics. The educated mind has tended to take over the identification of conservatism and classicism made by T. E. Hulme, who, incidentally, had a highly romantic and unreal notion of Original Sin. The identification has been furthered because of the marked preference of some conservatives for classical forms in verse and prose. But although classical elements enter the conservative vision, they do not constitute it.

The classical inheritance of law, for instance, belongs as much to the liberals as it does to the conservatives: both parties, when faithful to their professions, adhere commonly to our classical traditions of civil rights and liberties. In fact, Greek classicism, taken as a whole, better fits the liberal than the conservative mind. The rejection of traditional wisdom, the contempt for the inarticulate, the exaltation of formal education, the emphasis on the civic rather

Mr. Wilhelmsen, author of *Hilaire Belloc: No Alienated Man*, is a member of the faculty at Santa Clara University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than the familial, the cult of rationality—these are both Greek and liberal attitudes: they are foreign to the centre of historic traditionalism. Aristotle used the same principles to justify a slave society that many contemporary liberals use to justify a mechanized world: in order that man be free he must have leisure in which to educate himself for his responsibilities to society; thus the free man is the man who is released from labor, either by a slave or by a machine. That he might find not only dignity and fulfillment but poetry and salvation by uniting himself with the things that are, is a consideration too elusive to enter either the Parthenon or the Syntopicon.

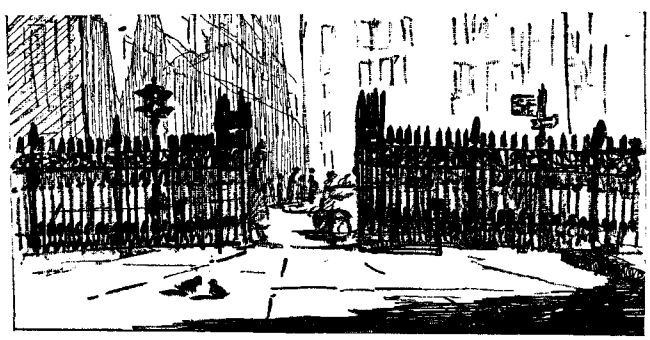
The conservative suspicion of abstractionism was summed up magnificently by Dr. Johnson when he said that "the Devil was the first Whig." But what does Whiggery and the Devil have to do with the present discussion? Nothing on the level of the abstract and rationally formulated; everything on the level of the psychic and mythic.

To the Christian, the Devil represents the quintessence of ontological perfection, shuddering before the impact of matter and the mystery of the Incarnation. To the Tory, the Liberal State represented the withdrawal of the cultivated mind from the mystery, variety, and impurity of traditional life. The analogy is fruitful for an understanding of conservatism, but it is fraught with danger because it risks making God a party to the forces of reaction. This is just as bad as making Him a party to the forces of progress. The danger is surmounted only if we are aware that the analogy simply symbolizes a profound stirring in the Western world of powers hitherto kept in check by the silent rhythm of traditional life.

THE conservative reaction cannot be understood unless we go to its medieval sources. But it is important to remember that traditional life is not necessarily medieval. Western traditional societies, surviving from medieval times, have been altered deeply by the modern world. For example, the traditions of French and South German peasant economies stem, in part, from the French Revolution, and the fierce sense of proprietorship and independence of these free men—they are the bulwark of continental conservatism—is, in a very real sense, an inheritance of the Revolution. But I think it fair to say that the mythic substructure, as well as the corporate substance of these societies and others like them, are in a living continuity with the traditions of the High Middle Ages. To grasp traditional society at the peak of its development and thereby come to terms with the conservative mind, we must look to medieval Christendom.

Medieval man had a firm grip on the difference between distinction and separation: poetry and morality, economy and technology, the temporal and the spiritual were distinguished one from another and these distinctions lie at the basis of the delicate hierarchy articulated by the men of the thirteenth century. But where distinctions abounded, sometimes without reason, no one element of cultural life was separated from, or permitted to dominate, the whole.

An archaic compactness governed medieval society which saw itself as a closed world of meanings branched out in different directions abstractly, but which were fused into a cultural unity by the catalyst of existence. As Romano Guardini has pointed out in his illuminating little book—*Das Ende der Neuzeit*—existence, for medieval man, was not only that through which something "is": it was also that which "means." And since the meaning of existence is fundamentally theological, everything in any sense claiming title to existence was given a religious significance.



Medieval man sacramentalized the whole of being. This sense of the symbolic issued into a fruitful and dense mingling of things formally distinct. Thus the Holy Roman Emperor wore a blue, star-spangled robe, representing the arc of the heavens and he carried the imperial globe representing the world. He symbolized the temporal fellowship of all Christians in Christendom and his coronation in Rome at the hands of the Pope signified the very dependence of the globe of the world on the creative will of God. (I would suggest, with all respect, that a man can learn more about the history and meaning of the West by meditating carefully on the misnamed "Crown of Charlemagne" than he can by reading any number of books arbitrarily called "great.")

As with political existence, so with man's life in space and time. The Word is incarnate in a Body, and the Church is that Body Mystic. Now all bodies are extended in space; it follows that the Church must extend herself through space: thus the Episcopal seat symbolizes the headship of Christ, and as the head has a body, so is the local church building the extension, the *situ*ation, of the Incarnation. The church building, in turn, stands in the same analogical re-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lation to cemeteries, chapels, and wayside crosses. In this manner the Church spreads through the open spaces and hallows the land.

The symbolization of space is paralleled by that of time. The earthly pilgrimage moves seasonably through time, and, since we are saved by a Man who lived out His years and died on this earth, each day and month and year of a man's life repeats the life of Christ. Hence the great liturgical feasts weave themselves into the rhythmic pauses of the seasons as they return forever upon themselves. But lest man fall back into the "eternal decadence" of the pagan cycle, he is always brought up short by the vision of the Judgment—confronting him in stone and glass all over Europe. The drama of present existence approaches, at the moment of death, the mystery of the timeless freedom of the angels who accept or reject their Creator forever in any act admitting neither progress nor decline. Thus the here-and-now takes on a sacred awesomeness psychologically compelling medieval man to make himself the center of the physical cosmos. The eyes of God are upon him and the world circles around his body as its very center. Hell is at his feet and heaven just above his head. He is separated from the Absolute by the thin crust of a material world that might dissolve any moment leaving him standing before his Judge.

If the cult of the Virgin shone at its brightest in medieval Europe, it was because Christian man had penetrated the meaning of existence: "God with us." And since *to be*—for a man—is to be *in time*, and since to be in time is to be *in matter,* it is no wonder that medieval man turned to the womb of God. Modern psychology, under the influence of Jung, is rediscovering, painfully and slowly, the role of woman in the economy of psychic existence. She is the enemy of abstraction and clarity. She represents passivity and patience, obedience, the traditions of the hearth and the continuity of the race. The Greek world had an almost effeminate horror of matter and physical existence: matter, said more than one philosopher under the spell of Greece, hungers for form the way woman hungers for man. The Greeks could not conceive matter in the timeless perfections of an abstract essence; therefore they consigned it to the darkness and unintelligibility of history, a "reality" so worthless that the discipline engaged in its penetration ranked even lower on the classical scale of values than poetry. Western historic existence, begun in the peasant Rome of Cato and the fathers, cannot be said to have come into its own until the Incarnation sanctified the things that pass.

Thus the God who is Being signs all things with His Name, and His Signature underwrites the order of historic existence. The Lord gives being to the material world and He legitimizes His gift by entering history in the womb of a woman and by hammering out His living over a carpenter's bench.

I am convinced that this medieval dream of this unity of all things in existence is the mythic foundation for what I would call the conservative vision: this is what I mean by the enchantment of reality.

A MODERN traditional society gets its heart from the medieval dream. Although the religious vision begins to recede down the corridors of time, although the symbolic battalions of God begin to march out of history, their muted drums can still be heard sounding through the fields and forests of the fatherland. A sense of the sacred lies over all things, and man, in the words of that great and haunted figure, Martin Heidegger, is content simply to "let being be." If modern man is the demiurge who reworks creation in his own image, traditional man—even as he survives into our day—is the man who celebrates the things that are.

A traditional society does not permit dissection into the categories of contemporary academicism. Reality is fused into too tight a cultural unity for rational analysis: like existence itself, such communities defy conceptualization.

A monarchy might turn out to be highly representative of the spirit of a people and thus fulfill the dream of democracy far better than a parliamentary republic: I am thinking of the Bavaria of the Wittelsbachs, where even today the people call the old gentleman of Nymphenburg, "Our King." The extent of "formal" education might be trivial and yet the level of popular culture high: I am thinking of the Andalusia of Lorca and the ritual of the ring. The amount of literature published, the numbers of students enrolled in university and college, might be low and yet the arts might flourish, only they will be the arts of pulpit and chase, cuisine and dress, custom and manner, arts which do not separate themselves from the community in order to find their own proper "essence", but which fill all society with poetry and thus soften the tragedy of life: I am thinking of the Old South and the Cavalier tradition. Finally, the existence of sharply defined classes might ironically mask a fundamental egalitarianism, the equality of all men in the face of Death who is made a guest at every table: I am thinking of Castile and the somber dignity of the poor of Spain; I am thinking of the *santos* of the Indians of my own Southwest, of the cottonwood Christus on the way to Golgotha in a cart, surrounded and escorted by an army of marching skeletons.

It is only the rationalist mentality, enamored of books and degrees, ignorant of history and innocent of the mystery of life, that insists on judging such com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munities in the light of an abstract company of essences inhabiting a ghostly republic of ideals foreign to the rhythm of being and becoming.

A venerable society, born in necessity, nurtured in courage and annealed in conflict, is the creation of experience. It throws around itself a mythic cape woven of symbols—poetic, social, religious—representing its marriage with reality and its compromise with the absolute. These symbols cannot be penetrated fully by reason. They touch the springs of being and there sounds about them the drama of salvation and damnation.

Before a society toughened by the impact of nature and hallowed by the passage of time, the wise halt in contemplation and wonder. Only the rationalist presumes to judge the goodness of an ancient community by an unreal and abstract standard of what society and government ought to be. And if the rationalist does grant some share of truth and value to a traditional society, he does so out of a concession to human weakness: these people, he says, have not yet been "educated" to assume their responsibilities to the modern world, etc. To the rationalist, history and existence, human affection and the poetry of a people, are "weaknesses" which his social and political ideal tolerates out of the largeness of its spirit.

In the old days, these people were called "rationalists;" today they are called "essentialists." Call them what you will, they remain forever the same: men who ignore diversity, who are embarrassed by tradition, and who are blind to mystery.

The conservative has always known—even though he could rarely express it philosophically—that essence is for the sake of existence, not existence for the sake of essence. The essence of a thing or of an institution must be judged by whether or not it fits that thing or institution to take its place in the economy of being and in the rise and fall of the tides of history.

ALL of this, of course, is in utter contradiction to the spirit of disenchantment and rationalization. The genealogy of the Western mind since the break-up of the medieval unity can be read in more than one valid way. But with so much said, permit me to hazard the guess that the role played by Calvinism has yet to be written. Tawney, Weber, and Belloc began the work, but no one has followed it through to its psychological and metaphysical depths. With Calvinism, the unity of all things in the bosom of traditional life was shattered for all time. Power fell to the "godded men" who looked upon temporal society as nothing but an instrument to bring about the golden world wherein the Lord would dwell in the midst of His saints. The state ceased to incarnate symbolically the convictions of its people.

No longer was God with man in the drama of the present moment of time. God was before him in the Kingdom which was to come into history. Thus the unique value of the present, so densely symbolized by medieval man, dissolved before the dream of the new world to come. Reality was no longer something *conserved,* cherished, and seen as the robe of God.

The double revelation of God to man, one supernatural and the other natural, was discarded as Papistical sophistry. Natural theology was legislated out of existence and with it went the songs and feasts of Christendom. The symbolic value of creation fell to pieces, and God—"the Totally Other"—retreated to the lonely splendor of His transcendent majesty.

With the rejection of matter, came the rejection of Mary: principle of darkness and mediation, she offended the need Calvinism felt to approach God directly, without the aid of sacraments, ritual, or mummery. The universe became nothing but the "raw material" of Manchesterianism, good only to be exploited and hammered into use. Thus a terrible psychic tension between a loathing for matter, linked with an almost fevered engagement with it in the mass production of industrialized goods, filled the Puritan with a restlessness and a burning energy that opened up *new* worlds less grossly connected with this one. The machine, as has been suggested, becomes the bride of man.

Freed from the restrictions of traditionalism, economics worked out its own laws, unaffected by morals and prescription. Poetry, discarded by the middle-class, went its way and sought a lonely destiny. Work, divorced from the limitations placed on it by medieval law and from the sense of play with which it was infused in the old sacramental order, came into its own and remade the world in the image of the machine.

Lest it be thought that I am making this all up out of my own reactionary head, listen to the words of Dr. Werner Heisenberg, speaking with all the authority of his genius before the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, in November, 1953: "Natural science stands no more as a spectator before nature, but recognizes itself as part of the game between man and nature. . . . We are constantly running up against structures built by man. Thus man is always meeting only himself." The Calvinist tension between spirit and matter is now dissolved by eliminating one pole of the dialectic.

As far as art is concerned, listen to what a critic has to say of the dream of Mallarmé who sums up faithfully art's attempt to divorce itself, not only from culture and morality, but from natural being: "To construct a poetry which would have the value of a preternatural creation and which would be able to enter into rivalry with the world of created things to the point of supplanting it totally." Thus life purges itself of poetry, and poetry purges itself of life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Abstract perfection running riot, uniting with a subterranean passion, divorced from the constraints of tradition and fed by a resentment born of boredom: this is the modern world. Charity demands that we save *this* world: it's the only one we have. But we conservatives cannot heal the age. In Latin America, we are blocked by one hundred and fifty years of anticlerical prejudice, and in some countries our people are even barred from the polls. In England, we are cracked between two parties both committed to the mass state. On the Continent, we went from Dachau into British concentration camps because we pledged allegiance to an old order. In the United States, our very name is stolen from us by Texas oil millionaires and seasoned character assassins.

I repeat the thesis: we conservatives cannot cure the modern world: we do not hold the power, nor is it likely to pass into our hands. But if liberals—and they are in the saddle almost all over the West—will make the descent into the maelstrom of the modern soul, they will find in conservatism a diagnosis of the disease of our time. We conservatives have lost our kings and our chivalry; our craftsmen are gone, and our peasantry is fast disappearing. Our horses have been shot from under us. We have nothing to offer the world but our vision.

Challenge to Conservatives

"IF THE MOVEMENT IS TO SUCCEED, IT MUST ASSUME A SHAPE THAT WILL GREATLY BEWILDER ITS PRESENT SPONSORS"

GEOFFREY ASHE

PHILOSOPHIC conservatism, through the agency of such spokesmen as Russell Kirk and Peter Viereck, has now been besieging the Western intelligentsia for more than five years. Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain. If the movement is to succeed, it must assume a shape that will greatly bewilder its present sponsors. Otherwise, the more triumphant its apparent success, the more hopeless will be its actual failure.

The *genuine* philosophic conservative, like the genuine philosophic anarchist, is a man who commands considerable respect. He need not be politically committed at all, and if he is, you cannot always guess his party allegiance. He believes in tradition and continuity; in culture and breadth of outlook; in craftsmanship and responsibility. He wants human beings to be living characters, with principles of their own, and he wants them to draw their chief principles from a stable realm of essentially Christian thought. To allow the realization of his ideals, a society must enjoy a large measure of justice, liberty, and security, and he does not hesitate to say so. It is understandable that numerous intelligent people everywhere should wish to affirm, or re-affirm, this philosophy. Nevertheless, they run the risk of shipwreck on a treacherous rock.

In practice the would-be philosophic conservative usually drifts into alliance with men who describe themselves as conservatives and are not. It is a perilous liaison. To argue, as Mr. Kirk himself does, that most of the members of Congress are conservative-minded, is to stand exposed to the hazards of an inquiry into the social order which they conserve. To extol, as (for example) Evelyn Waugh does, the excellence of the British public-school crowd as the repository of ancient virtue, involves not merely Mr. Waugh's admission that the repository contains rubbish besides, but also a much more deadly debate as to whether the virtue can really be disinterred from it.

LET us consider Congress first. What most of its members agree in upholding is something a very little to the left of what *Fortune* upholds. It is a Big Business America with various checks and balances—a mass of small enterprise that is welcome to flourish as long as it stays small; a competent but definitely co-operative labor movement; a bedrock of home ownership; and so on. Out of the combination a certain way of life develops. Is it conservatism? Does *Fortune* call it conservatism? No; *Fortune* has taken a leaf out of Trotsky's book and called it a "permanent revolution." *Fortune* has more lately pontificated about "the American breakthrough." There is no doubt that this eminent magazine is correct, as is the instinct of innumerable Americans who, while politically well to the right, would speak of their national economy as dynamic.

Since the U.S. became a Big Business country, she has revolutionized herself and the world. That process has gone galloping onward whether or not the bus-

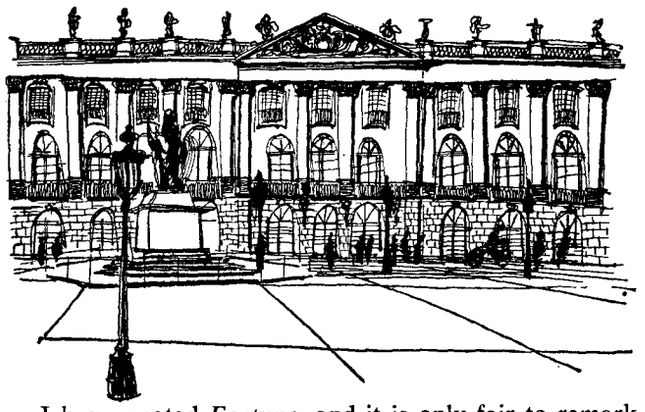
---

Mr. Ashe, who lives in Canada, writes on political and social questions for publications on both sides of the Atlantic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inessmen have held political power. Forty-odd years ago the plutocrats beat back the respective radicalisms of Bryan and Debs—whereupon their conservative America plunged forward into mass-production and the automobile age, witnessing in rapid procession the obsolescence of craftsmanship, the eclipse of socialism, the rise of industrial unions, fantastic human specialization, a monstrous development of clerical labor, an unparalleled growth of communication and general mobility, mass-medium thought-control, and changes in living standards so huge as to stultify all comparisons. Changes promised for the next fifty years by electronics, automation, computers, and atomic power, are no less revolutionary. It is hard to see how a Congress dedicated to the system responsible for such mighty upheavals can be spoken of as conservative.

Is conservatism a question of attitudes and habits, and not of environment or organization? But attitudes and habits do not stand still while everything else alters. David Riesman, William H. Whyte and others have shown how American capitalism is breeding an authentically new human type—the "other-directed," "group-thinking" man, who is a resultant of social pressures rather than a character in himself. The shift from "inner-directed" to "other-directed" life is of course a catastrophic defeat for conservative ideals; but even that is not the main point. The capitalism of the future may undo the work of the past. But sociologically speaking, the issue is settled. What becomes of the supposed conservative alliance with capitalism, when capitalism has once proved, as a matter of unchangeable record, its power to wrest human nature away from the conservative outlook?



I have quoted *Fortune*, and it is only fair to remark that the editors of *Fortune* have uttered protests against the whole group-thinking tendency and the whole insipid apotheosis of social adjustment. Perhaps the conservative in quest of political friends should search a trifle to the right of the national average as reflected in Congress. But suppose he does. Whom and what will he encounter? Mainly Old Guard Republicanism, commercial philistinism, and policies seemingly calculated to deliver the whole earth to the Communists; or else—McCarthy and his kind. The latter prospect is so alarming that some of the New Conservatives have tried to maintain that McCarthy is "really" on the left. This, in itself, may or may not be a tenable opinion. Certainly it hints at the transvaluation which the genuine conservative appears forced to effect.

Let us take another look at the matter as it concerns a place where tradition is supposed to count for much more: namely England. The mere name conjures up majestic visions of royalty, patriotism, justice, vague but profound Christian faith, noble old architecture and the English countryside. For thirty years England has been largely governed by a group called the Conservative Party, which sets itself up as the custodian of all these things. Is it conservative? What, actually, is the record of the gentry and businessmen who are the soul of the Party? What have they conserved?

Not, at any rate, the noble old architecture or the English countryside. A survey of that countryside as it really is, after a generation or two of official conservatism, conveys the impression of a sort of congealed brick-and-mortar jacquerie. Formless mobs of ugly houses and factories have surged over the green hills and—stayed there. The march has been partially arrested, order and beauty have been in some degree recovered, by a series of counter-measures on the part of public authorities. Today England has a New Towns program, a Town and Country Planning Act. But did these come into being under Conservative auspices? No. They were Labor measures, and the Conservatives fought them.

Are Conservatives patriotic? When Labor was in office, many of them stuck at nothing to discredit their country in the eyes of the world. Are they faithful to the Christian religion? Look at their commercialization of Christmas. Are they royalists, except when they can use royalty for their own purposes? They concocted the Jubilee of King George V for party advantage; they fired Edward VIII when he asked questions about the unemployed; they are now trying to stabilize the British economy in their own sense by exploiting the personality and prestige of the Duke of Edinburgh. The point is not that the Conservatives are unfit to govern. Their fitness remains an open question. The point is not that they are hypocrites; for of course many of them are sincere and admirable. The point is that they are not effectively conservative.

TODAY, then, philosophic conservatism can only be the creed of an eccentric minority, and in so far as it truly asserts itself, it must do so against the gentlemen in power. The true counter-revolution is none

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

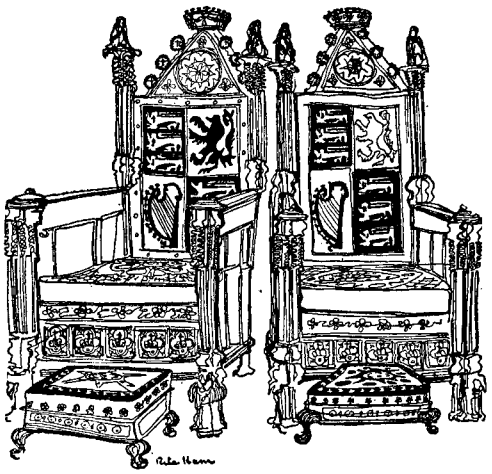
the less a revolution. The authentic tory may, perhaps must, turn out to be a species of rebel.

Paradoxical? Not at all. It is a matter of history that more than one prominent radical has in fact been a tory. The last Jacobite proclamation in Britain was made by striking coal-miners, and a glance at the Industrial Revolution in that country will dispel any idea that the repudiation of the past is an essential part of the radical tradition. William Cobbett, faced with the ghastly havoc perpetrated by the nominally conservative classes, cried out against them in the name of pre-industrial England. He recalled the craftsman's cottage with its garden, and the beer-and-beef diet of a less downtrodden generation. Plunging further than the romantics themselves, he rifled the historical scholarship of Lingard to construct a wild pamphlet glorifying the Middle Ages. He was aware of no conflict between such outbursts as these and the agitation for a reformed parliament; nor were his contemporaries. Cobbett was entirely true to his radical principles when he denounced the socialism of Robert Owen.

Shelley, that tremendous and disorganized genius, is remembered on the political side chiefly for silly undergraduate verses attacking God, kings, priests, statesmen, and the practice of eating meat. But when he spoke out more notably denouncing the Peterloo Massacre and urging revolution, he did not call for a break with the past. He called for something more like a return to the past. How many readers, with modern notions of revolution in their heads, have been startled by his lines in "The Mask of Anarchy?"

> Men of England, heirs of glory,
> Heroes of unwritten story,
> Nurslings of one mighty Mother,
> Hopes of her, and one another: . . .
>
> Let the laws of your own land,
> Good or ill, between ye stand,
> Hand to hand, and foot to foot,
> Arbiters of the dispute: —
>
> The old laws of England — they
> Whose reverend heads with age are gray,
> Children of a wiser day;
> And whose solemn voice must be
> Thine own echo — Liberty!
>
> On those who first should violate
> Such sacred heralds in their state
> Rest the blood that must ensue;
> And it will not rest on you.

Here, then, are two rebels of the past taking their stand quite openly on conservatism. But in the twentieth century, in the same country, the phenomenon recurs with a shift of emphasis. We find men of conservative temper maneuvered by the logic of their beliefs into a radicalism so extreme as to amount to virtual isolation. And these, I submit, are the true conservatives.



The great and obvious name is that of Chesterton. Early in life he discovered the Christian and conservative values. As soon as he tried to speak up for them in public, he made the further discovery that he was completely out of tune with the times. During his controversy with Blatchford, a man sitting next to him at dinner asked whether he really believed the dogmas he was defending. "I assured him that I did," Chesterton afterwards reported, "and all through that dinner I think he felt as if he were sitting next to some fabulous griffin."

The heroes of the two fantasies, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* and *The Man who was Thursday,* both reflect that early discovery. Adam Wayne revolutionizes the dismal England of 1984 (an odd coincidence) by taking a sham medieval revival seriously. Gabriel Syme, born in the radical purple, makes conservatism itself a revolt. Chesterton's observation of politics drove him to launch Distributism; and the history of that movement illustrates the danger already referred to, of attaching oneself in the name of conservatism to people whose conservatism is dubious.

Chesterton himself sincerely opposed modern capitalism as well as modern socialism. So did his co-Distributist Belloc. However, after Chesterton's death and Belloc's retirement, the epigoni of their gallant adventure became apologists for Franco, assailed the Labor Government more viciously than the Beaverbrook press, and sidled up to Anthony Eden the moment he coined a phrase about "property-owning democracy." Result, fiasco. Distributists such as Maisie Ward who respect the original intention have long since dropped the Distributist League.

George Orwell would have rejected the parallel, but it is now pretty widely realized that the motivation

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

behind him was similar to Chesterton's. His attempt to grapple with essentially the same problem drove him into a frustration more absolute than that of Distributism. Despite all his socialist protestations, the novel *Coming up for Air* betrays him. It describes a small country town in 1910 and the same town in 1939, overwhelmed and debased by the onslaught of the twentieth century. To recoil into socialism was easy. But what happens when you join a revolution only to find that the revolutionaries have no use for the values you want to fight for? That is the root of Orwell's despair, and his inquisitor O'Brien is only carrying to extremes the "progressive" outlook which his soul revolted against.

IT may be argued that the failures of Chesterton and Orwell, and the ineffectiveness of such forces as left-wing Christian Democracy in Europe, sufficiently refute the entire notion of Tory Radicalism. Yet, if it is a fallacy, it is an extraordinarily vital one. Confronted as we are today with the spectacle of Fabians' admitting that the doctrine of original sin is more probable than the doctrine of progress; of Aneurin Bevan's shaking off the grip of the intellectuals and resuscitating the socialism of sixty years ago; of the *New Statesman's* reopening the "faith and reason" debate: we may well wonder whether the atmosphere in at least one major country is not growing more favorable.

In America, the most promising revolutionaries at present are the visionary technicians such as Norbert Wiener. Precisely where they are going, it is not always easy to make out. However, people in contact with the progress of automation are beginning to murmur strange tidings: that the robot factory will demand more skill, not less; that craftsmanship is creeping back at a new level; that the shapeless massman of Ford industrialism has had his day. They also tell us that the functionalized specialist, the hypertrophied engineer, is proving unequal to the problems of industry; that breadth of scope and even a liberal education are turning out to be capable of winning tricks after all.

Changes there must be. The conservative who plunges into the flux may succeed in giving those changes a bias toward the philosophy he endorses. The conservative who turns his back, or who cheers on the businessmen without intervening in their activities, cannot hope to do so. Conservative values have quite certainly not maintained their ground under the aegis of nominal conservatism. To suggest that they are more likely to revive in the heart of a radical apocalypse is not to embrace a paradox. The word "apocalypse" is a Christian word, and it belongs to a realm of fiery and awful absolutes.

MINORITY RULE

The Dice Are Slightly Loaded

DID you know that eighteen Senators represent one-half of the American population and seventy-eight Senators represent the other half? I'll bet you didn't know either that thirty-six Senators from the eighteen smallest states represent fewer voters than the two Senators from New York.

There doesn't seem to be much that anyone can do about this situation. In order to persuade the thirteen original states to give up their sovereignty, the framers of the Constitution wrote in the principle of equal representation for the states and made it practically impossible for us to change it. It doesn't make much sense any more, but we're stuck with it.

The curious thing is that the House of Representatives is about as bad as, and maybe worse than, the U.S. Senate from the standpoint of misrepresentation. The Founding Fathers didn't figure on this. They provided that Representatives shall be divided among the states "according to their respective numbers." It would seem to follow that each state should in turn divide up its congressional districts so that approximately the same number of voters are in each district.

For example, at the time of the 1950 census there were roughly 150,000,000 people in this country. With 435 seats in the House that means a congressional district should run about 345,000. But what do we have in fact? We have districts ranging from South Dakota's 2nd (159,000) to the 8th in Texas (807,000). In other words, a vote in the South Dakota district is worth more than five times as much as a vote in the big Texas 8th.

In the U.S. Senate there may be unequal representation as between the states, but at least the Senators themselves are elected on the basic democratic principle of "one man one vote" throughout their own states. The result is that a Senator is usually more sensitive to the labor vote, which is a city vote, than is the typical Representative.

Take just two examples. In Ohio there are twice as many voters in the eleven urban districts as there are in the eleven rural districts. ("Rural" is defined here as districts that do not have cities of more than 100,000 population.) The result is that the rural areas get four more Congressmen than they deserve. (P.S. All these districts are Republican.)

Or take California. Take in particular Los Angeles

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

County, California. After the census of 1950 California was awarded seven additional seats in Congress, Republicans who controlled the state legislature did a nifty job of redistricting in order to pick up the lion's share of these new seats. In Los Angeles County, by a combination of gerrymandering and what you might call "rotten-boroughing," the Republicans won eight seats representing a total population of 2,108,000, or an average of 296,000 per district. The Democrats were permitted to win four seats, but they represented 1,788,000 people, or an average of 447,000.

The above facts are extracted from the CIO's "Economic Outlook" and from *Democracy in the United States* by William H. Riker, professor of government at Harvard. Riker estimates that districting in favor of rural areas over urban has given the Republicans "about thirty unearned seats" in the House and conservative Southern Democrats "about ten."

You can imagine what a shift of forty seats from the conservative to the liberal side in Congress would mean for any kind of social legislation. A majority of seventy for an anti-labor bill would be turned into a defeat by ten. A loss on a pro-labor measure by thirty votes would become victory by fifty votes.

WHAT are we waiting for? What we are waiting for is the winning of control of state legislatures by the Democrats in the North and by progressive Democrats in the South. For it is the state legislatures that set up the districts. And there are few state legislatures where New Deal Democrats control both houses.

This is going to take a deal of doing because it is also the state legislatures that set up the districts that elect state senators and assemblymen. In many states the constitution provides for arrangement whereby counties or townships all get equal representation, patterned on the U.S. Senate. For example, in the enlightened state of Connecticut they are still getting away with a deal whereby the city of Hartford, with 177,397 people, has two representatives in the lower house and the town of Colebrook, with a population of 592, also has two representatives. How can you beat a set-up like that?

The U.S. Conference of Mayors reports that in 1947 the Americans who were living in urban centers represented fifty-nine per cent of the population but were allowed to elect only twenty-five per cent of the state legislators. Today the figure has risen from fifty-nine to sixty-five per cent and the inequality is even worse.

Senator Richard Neuberger of Oregon once sat in his state senate. At the time he wrote this: "I represent 81,000 people. A few desks away sits a senator from a realm of sagebrush and mountains and he represents 7,200 people. . . . The result is that each resident of this senator's district in the backwoods has eleven times the voice in the state senate of one of my constituents in Portland."

Neuberger also had some sharp observations on the alleged conflict between farm and city interests. "In nine instances out of ten," he reminds us, "the law which is good for the truck driver is good for the orchardist as well." And he points out that "although I represent the state's only large city, I led the Grange's (farm organization) box score with eleven 'favorable' votes and one regarded as 'unfavorable.' Ironically, at the bottom of the Grange compilation, with only three 'favorable' votes each, was a trio of senators from agricultural areas."

WHAT to do? There can be no correction of rotten boroughing within the states except by state action. This need not, however, be only by control of the legislature. In many states it is possible to initiate action by way of a referendum.

For the abuse of Congressional districting federal action is possible. Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution says that "the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations" for electing Representatives).

A few years ago Emmanuel Celler of New York introduced a bill in the House which would have required that no state could have a variation of more than fifteen per cent above or below the average district arrived at by dividing the state's population by its quota of Representatives. This would have hit thirty-one states, ranging from Texas, with a variation of one hundred and thirty per cent and districts ranging from 807,000 to 226,000, down to Massachusetts, with a variation of sixteen per cent and districts ranging from 282,000 to 390,000. I don't know what happened, but the bill never became law.

John Locke wrote of the English rotten boroughs as follows: "To what gross absurdities the following of custom when reason has left it may lead, we may be satisfied when we see the bare name of a town, of which there remains not so much as the ruins, where scarce so much housing as a sheepcote, or more inhabitants than a shepherd is to be found, send as many representatives to the grand assembly of lawmakers as a whole county numerous in people and powerful in riches. This strangers stand amazed at, and everyone must confess needs a remedy; though most think it hard to find one. . ."

Locke's pessimism was well founded. He wrote that in 1690 and even the rottenest boroughs were not abolished until 1832. I wonder how long it will take us in this country.

JOHN C. CORT.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SEE THEIR FACES

BACK in the thirties a book of photographs was published under the arresting title of *You Have Seen Their Faces*. As I remember, it was a depression book. The faces shown were those of the unemployed, sharecroppers, Okies, kids on the bum. That title has always lingered in my head. Today, I was wondering about some people whose faces I have seen through the years, wondering what happened to some of them, trying to imagine what others are doing.

Everyone in our highly mobile society touches the lives of numberless other people, people who remain forever anonymous in some cases, merely a name in others, or the slightest acquaintances in others. If you move around a great deal, as I have, these people, taken as a group, get indelibly associated in your mind with vast social, economic and political problems.

At the University in Fribourg (Switzerland), I got to know a number of young priests and seminarians finishing up their studies. They came from all over the world. Some were nationals of countries behind the Iron Curtain. Some were training to be foreign missionaries in the Orient. I recall definite youthful faces and that wonderful exuberance and innocence, if that is the word, that seem to mark seminarians the world over.

Now, when I read something about the persecution of the Church in this place or that throughout the world, I wonder about these priests, all of them still young men. How has this one or the other stood up to it? Where is the fresh-faced young man who was going to be a missionary in China? What is he doing now? What kind of history has he had? Is he in a Communist prison cell somewhere? Is he faced with the temptation to play along, or is he resisting with the kind of courage he believed in so passionately? What does that remembered face look like now?

I don't know the answers. The young priest was never more to me than a grin and a name. But if the young priest in the prison-cell, or anguished over the Totalitarian Temptation, is not this one, it is another who was once equally exuberant, equally fresh-faced and innocent.

There was that famous steel strike in South Chicago, 1937. If you were not around then, you simply can not understand what the strike meant at the time. There were eager young Communist students in the thick of things there, and others, out of school but almost as young, filled with the spirit of social rebellion and utterly enthusiastic about remaking the world according to their new-found faith.

Those remembered faces are older now. Some of them, who then had such scorn for us Catholics and our slow-motion methods, are now big-name anti-Communists. Others have melted into the sea of contented, unprotesting American faces. A few—a very few I suspect—are probably still hard-core Party members. All are older; a few are wiser. The year 1937 was a long time ago, but the little snapshots the mind holds yellow slowly.

I remember a particular college girl in the Communist group from the University which marched round and round the great mill, in the black of the night, singing over and over "Solidarity Forever." I did not know the girl, but her intensity was unforgettable. What has happened to her now, almost twenty years later? Does the class-war atmosphere of that exciting night now seem as vague and distant as it does to me? A foolish, youthful case of collegiate radicalism that she has long since lived down? Does she make jokes about her intensity at suburban cocktail parties now, or was that the beginning of a lifetime dedication to the Communist cause?

And what about the young Catholics who took so seriously the idea that the Church had to go to the workingman and thus stood with the brave young priests who turned an easy phrase into a reality in that strike? The Catholics at that steel strike back in 1937 were young and innocent too, and maybe there was a touch of collegiate radicalism in them, too—but their action (no one called it Catholic Action) was meaningful at the time and, I think, had significant long-range results.

When Ed Marciniak, editor of *Work,* the Catholic labor paper in Chicago, put out the paper's first issue, the local Communist press asked sarcastically where he was during the days of the great organizing drive. They accused him of moving in on the labor scene after all the hard work had been done. Marciniak answered that at the time they spoke of, he was riding in a patrol wagon, because he had been arrested for handing out leaflets at the stockyards in support of the Packinghouse Workers organizing drive. Marciniak was a Catholic college student who got up early in the morning to distribute leaflets before his first class.

I know what happened to Ed Marciniak. He has been consistent. The idealism that motivated him to act on the papal encyclicals has never died; it has only matured. But I wonder about others. Do they too make jokes at cocktail parties?

Can one read about the Arab-Israeli dispute without thinking of a particular Arab refugee one remembers, cold and ragged and full of bitterness, standing beside his wind-torn tent in a Palestine camp? Can one judge the situation only by this Arab's plight when one remembers a particular conversation with a particular Israeli who told about the furnace-deaths of his entire family and spoke of the new chance in Israel, with a kind of reverence and wonder?

"You have seen their faces." But when you recall their faces, the heroes-and-villains picture of the world gets blurry, indeed.

JOHN COGLEY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SCREEN

IT AIN'T MEASLES

NOT having seen the stage play of "The Seven Year Itch," I can't make comparisons; but I have a sneaking idea that George Axelrod, who wrote the original and collaborated with Billy Wilder on the film's script, was a little surprised at how it all came out. The story concerns a rather mild-mannered man, played to perfection by Tom Ewell. He sees his wife and young son off on their vacation and then plans to settle down to a summer of sane living and hard work in hot New York. Because he's a very imaginative fellow along certain lines (he works for a company publishing those paper-bound quarter books and helps design their flashy covers) and because he is quite impressed with the book on psychology he is editing (especially the chapter on male infidelity in the seventh year of marriage), the girl upstairs has no trouble at all in upsetting his plans and peace. In her naive way, she doesn't mean to upset anyone, but since the role is played by Marilyn Monroe as a delectable dumb bunny, she throws Tom and the whole picture for a loop.

Instead of being elegantly made in CinemaScope and color as is "The Seven Year Itch," this should have been a little picture about a middle-aged little man who thinks he has a yen for the girl upstairs while his wife's away. Billy Wilder, who also directed (and produced with Charles K. Feldman), held to the tone of the story in the hilarious scenes in which Ewell imagines himself resisting seduction by three different women; but as the actual events in Axelrod's story wear thin and get repetitive, Wilder relies more and more on Monroe's beauty and obvious attractions. The rest of the cast (Evelyn Keyes, Sonny Tufts, Robert Strauss, Victor Moore, *et al.*) are almost slighted. Some of the jokes are very funny, and some (like the psychiatry sequence with Oscar Homolka, and, later, Ewell's knocking out Tufts) are downright silly. As the once-amusing story drags on and on endlessly and Tom acts more and more like a fool, one begins to think the whole thing should have been called the seven year picture.

I'M not exactly sure for whom the two other films released this week were made. "A Prize of Gold," with a script by Robert Buchner and John Paxton from the novel by Max Catto, tells the story of an American (Richard Widmark) and British (George Cole) sergeant in Berlin who cook up a fantastic scheme for stealing a bar of gold that is being flown to London. Both men are prompted by lack of funds and interest in a girl—although Widmark's girl (Mai Zetterling) has no knowledge of the high-flown machinations and is mainly concerned with getting a group of forlorn displaced children to the healthier climate of Brazil. Director Mark Robson allows the first half of his film to move pretty slowly while he develops character and shows off post-war Berlin in Technicolor; and the last half of his picture speeds by so fast, with time out only for gruesome violence, that it becomes almost like an old-fashioned adventure serial. In spite of the acting of the good cast (which also includes Nigel Patrick who gives an outstanding performance as the most villainous of the conspirators) "A Prize of Gold" failed to win or hold me. Its shoddy moral set-up made me uncomfortable all down the line.

PERHAPS that is also the trouble with "Moonfleet," in which, except for the little boy who is the central character (brilliantly played by Jon Whiteley), all the people have such low standards that one is repelled by scene after scene. As far as sets and atmosphere are concerned, Producer John Houseman has caught the mood of J. Meade Falkner's novel about the youngster who comes to eighteenth-century Dorsetshire to place himself in the care of a gentleman. But the gentleman (Stewart Granger) is head of a band of smugglers, and neither he nor his mean workmen (Sean McClory, Melville Cooper) nor his high-class associates (George Sanders, Joan Greenwood, Viveca Lindfors) are fit company for the brave little fellow who views all the wicked goings-on with innocent spaniel eyes. The story, at times reminiscent of *Kidnapped* and *Great Expectations,* gets pretty confusing at times, and while Director Fritz Lang fails to make motivations clear, he does manage to give you many a scare while plucky Jon makes his way under overcast skies along the craggy coast, or through the forbidding cemetery or in underground passages or, worst of all, in the company of his depraved elders.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE CHALLENGE OF ABUNDANCE"

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: I read with very great interest your editorial on "The Challenge of Abundance" [May 20] which is based on our joint statement of May 4 on "American Abundance and World Need." This is an inspiration to those of us who are interested

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in our foreign relations to rekindle our efforts in this field.

While I recognize that the contribution of material surplus has great importance for all countries I still believe that there is something over and above this which we should all ponder. Our own principles as Christians must lead us to accept a bond of brotherhood that links together all peoples of the world. The graces and blessing of the Incarnation were intended for all peoples. Somehow or other I am more and more convinced that in our mission to other peoples we must think not merely of technicians but of people with real convictions in regard to a universal Christian brotherhood.

I have just received a statement from one of my friends in India, Albert Meyer, and he seems to labor more and more what the voluntary groups can do in the development of the new neighborhood self-help programs of India. He talks about the interest of the different Universities, but there is a certain note of sadness all through his statement. Our technicians do not remain in India long enough to make a real impression. They stay about one year but he says this is not enough.

After reading Albert Meyer's statement I read a paper on Community Development in India by Dr. Sushila Nayar, Representative of India on the Social Commission. The delegate points to the background of Gandhi's philosophy as the foundation for such a program. She mentions the Constructive Workers Associations under the leadership of Gandhi and various other programs that are carried on by voluntary groups. I was again reminded of the importance of having groups that are thoroughly indoctrinated and want to give a good part of their lives to this program. Let's not forget the long distance that we still have to go in overcoming our own prejudices in the field of immigration and our relationships to the Negro in our own country.

(*Rt. Rev. Msgr.*) JOHN O'GRADY,
Secretary, Nat'l Conf. of Catholic Charities.

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: I agree that we are indeed compelled, not only in conscience, but by considerations of enlightened self-interest, to share our God-given abundance. I think it is important to recognize, as you do ["The Challenge of Abundance," May 20], that our abundance is more than existing surpluses, or even existing material productive capacity. The sharing of our technical proficiency and our economic and organizational know-how, and the rendering of moral leadership worthy of America's heritage, are perhaps the highest contributions we can make to our neighbors in the world.

I believe a parallel could be drawn between the needs of the people of the free world, and the needs of America's farmers. In some cases each group can derive some benefit from direct, material grants. But the greatest gift to each in the long run is to provide the non-material resources that can help them to help themselves.

EZRA TAFT BENSON,
Secretary of Agriculture.

"CATHOLICS AND THE MOVIES"

Lakeville, Conn.

TO the Editors: You seem not quite fair to yourselves in your editorial on "Catholics and the Movies" [June 3]. Speaking of "both camps—liberals and Catholics," and of "the liberals" and "the Catholics," seems to indicate a belief that Catholics and liberals constitute mutually exclusive groups. Yet the editors of The Commonweal are a complete demonstration that this is not true.

Under any usable definition of "liberal" in a discussion of social questions, the editors of The Commonweal, the editors of *America,* Msgr. Higgins of the column "Yardstick," and innumerable other Catholics seem to be unambiguous liberals.

Doubtless all sincere and informed members of the three large religious groups in America (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish), could properly be called conservatives in theology. But in the discussion of the problems of our society in such fields as economics, politics, international relations, and civil liberties, the dividing line between the liberal, or progressive, and the conservative, or the reactionary, divides all three of these religious groups.

Probably the best thermometer we have for measuring the degree of liberalism in various groups, political parties, or geographical sections, is the Congress of the United States. An analysis of the voting of the Catholics in the Seventy-ninth and Eightieth Congresses as compared to the voting of the Congress as a whole, shows that the Catholics in Congress are more liberal by a wide margin than the non-Catholics.

In these tabulations the side was called "liberal" which was supported by the *C.I.O. News* and *The New Republic.* In the Seventy-ninth Congress the tabulation was made on 14 bills; in the Eightieth on 15.

In the Seventy-ninth Congress the Catholic Senators voted liberal 71% of the time, the Senate as a whole voted liberal 33% of the time; in the House the Catholics voted liberal 71% of the time, the House as a whole 34% (*American Catholic Sociological Review*, Dec. 1946).

In the Eightieth Congress the eleven Catholic Senators voted on the liberal side on the 15 bills as follows: out of 165 possible Catholic votes in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Senate, 14 were listed as absent or not voting; of the 151 votes cast, 107 were for the liberal side, 44 for the conservative. In the House out of 630 possible Catholic votes by 45 Representatives on 14 bills, 38 were listed as absent or not voting; of the 592 votes cast by this group 415 were on the liberal side and 177 on the conservative side (The Commonweal, Jan. 14, 1949; see also The Commonweal, June 16, 1950).

Mr. Lerner's absurd remark in the N. Y. *Post* about "clerical censors" and a "straitjacket to stifle all creativeness" does not seem to be relevant evidence as to the "profundity of the liberal mind"; it simply demonstrates that Mr. Lerner does not understand the difference between adverse criticism and censorship, or the social ideal of the Legion of Decency. The activity of the Legion is criticism, in all essentials identical with the activity of the dramatic critics and book reviewers in the daily press. Those who are guided by the Legion, or the *New Yorker,* or the *Saturday Review,* have to make the decision for themselves. No one can prevent their free decision, or fine or imprison them for carrying it into effect. Dispraise equally with praise is a legitimate exercise of freedom of press and speech, and obviously clergymen have the same freedom as journalists.

Differences of opinion, inevitable in any free society of intelligent people, when expressed in argument, debate, agitation, campaigning, pressure, is at once the perfect demonstration of the reality of freedom, and the one way in which a free society lives and grows. Anyone who does not understand, and cheerfully accept, this situation is not entitled to be called a liberal; he is ill adapted to live with others in equality and freedom.

J. M. O'NEILL.

BOOKS

An Examination of the World of Letters

THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS. Essays on Various Writers. By Louis Kronenberger. Knopf. $3.75.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

ONE may classify writers on literature as either scholars or gentlemen; I do not mean that the gentlemen are amateurs and the scholars professionals—far from it. Louis Kronenberger has made literature his profession to an extent undreamed of by most professors of literature, but he is none the less a gentleman rather than a scholar. To paraphrase his own essay on "Pundits and Philistines," he is less concerned with education than with culture.

A gentleman will not be deterred from writing about a work of art simply because he has nothing new to say; conversely, he does not feel obliged to find something new to say of a work of art simply because he is writing about it. "Once upon a time," writes Mr. Kronenberger, "criticism boasted a good many superior, even rather noble, hacks: doubtless the Saintsburys read too much, wrote too much to order, failed at times to see the forest for the trees—but they kept a great body of good literature in circulation, they made it seem important or alluring." Mr. Kronenberger possesses more than his share of the last-named talent, as did certain critics—H. L. Mencken, Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey—to whom he devotes essays in *The Republic of Letters.* If he *is* a hack, then he is a superior one. I wish the average scholar could write just half as well.

Though Mr. Kronenberger deplores the tendency of the scholars to write more and more about fewer and fewer authors, he himself hardly displays a wide enough range, at least in the present volume. Except for La Rochefoucauld and Chekhov, he confines himself to English-speaking authors, among whom, except for Byron, he is limited to authors of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

Bearing in mind that Mr. Kronenberger's function is not to have new ideas about the English classics but to win new readers for them, we may profitably examine his methods. The critic who deals mainly in "appreciation" can't just say "Ooh!" or "Aah!"; he must talk about the book as a familiar friend until we long to get to know it too. In the process he may give us a good deal of sound criticism and incur, probably, a substantial debt to the scholar.

One sees this process in "Byron's 'Don Juan,'" one of the best essays in the book. Mr. Kronenberger begins by reminding us of Byron's preposterously colorful life, which he summarizes in a paragraph, commenting, "The whole thing has something excessive about it; there are writers whose careers are an affront to realism, an offense against art." His purpose in recalling the facts of Byron's life is not to add spice to his essay but to establish that "'Don Juan' is not an example of literature compensating for life. . . ." Yet the poem is not autobiographical; though it expresses all of Byron, it does not portray him. Instead of becoming his own hero, as in "Childe Harold" ("he turned pose into poetry," says Mr. Kronenberger of such works), Byron chose in "Don Juan" to be "not actor but showman." The poem better fits the category of a "show" than it does that of satire or epic, yet no matter how often the scene changes, the audience always get something solid for their money: "Byron deals in meaningless wars but not sham battles; in too lush Mediterranean scenes, perhaps, but never painted backdrops." How true that statement rings to anyone who knows the poem—and how persuasive, in its epigrammatic terseness, to anyone who doesn't.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Kronenberger next considers Byron's satire and, above all, his satirical spirit: "Obviously what makes any great satirist is much less the occasion for scoffing than the disposition to scoff; for the true satirist, opportunity, so far from knocking only once, knocks all day long." The very unevenness of the satire becomes a recommendation: " 'Don Juan' mingles the wit of the salon with the horseplay of the schoolroom," and by its all-inclusiveness becomes a "dazzling exhibition of the life-force."

Pointing out what a surprisingly rich culture Byron reveals through his use of quotation, Mr. Kronenberger goes on to remind us how quotable—and how frequently quoted—"Don Juan" is. Next, our attention is drawn to Byron's basic respect for his medium, verse; if his comic sense and his respect for tradition keep him to some extent within proper bounds, the stanza form he employs keeps "a smooth road under him."

Finally, we are offered a comparison between "Don Juan" and *Tom Jones;* the similarities are surprisingly many: "And yet . . . well, I have actually, and understandably, never seen the two compared. For it is somehow like comparing a solid with a liquid, a side of beef with a great bowlful of rum punch. . . ." "Don Juan's" claim to be poetry and not mere versified prose is triumphantly asserted, though never proved. The scholar always hopes he can *prove* that something is good or bad art, or at any rate prove *something;* the gentleman, in the long run, is content if others learn to enjoy what he enjoys.

Near Neighbors

THE FRENCH CANADIANS 1760-1945. By H. Mason Wade. Macmillan. $6.50.

By MAURICE LAVANOUX

THIS book comes at an opportune time. The newspapers have made us all familiar with the rumblings of "colonialism" on its way to independence. Here the author gives us the story of a people whose life has been, in a sense, one of colonialism in reverse. The French Canadians have long fought to preserve their ancient culture, loyalties and independence and, as Mr. Wade notes in the preface: ". . . are the *Sinn Feiners* of North America, for their strong group consciousness and cohesiveness arise from a basic loneliness and insecurity." Quebec's motto—*I remember*—is no empty formula since it implies a sense of continuity in a culture cherished by the French Canadians, but a culture linked to the past heroic days of the French themselves in Canada.

The Province of Quebec has been the stronghold of clericalism in North America and this is natural when we realize that it was the Church, rather than the monarchy of old France, which gave the colony the support it needed in the early days. It is perhaps one of the anomalies of our times that the intransigent attitude of the French

THE CATHOLIC WORKER

June, 1955

A Re-Evaluation of Christian Anarchism
ROBERT LUDLOW

Open Letter to Konrad Adenauer
FATHER UDE

Conversation on Distributism
DOROTHY DAY

Tolerance and the Catholic
A Review by HELENE ISWOLSKY

Subscription 25c per year. Foreign 80c.
Bundle orders, 10 or more copies,
1c per copy plus postage.

Free Sample Copy on Request

The Catholic Worker
GRamercy 5-8826
223 Chrystie Street New York 2, N. Y.

LEWIS COLLEGE
Of SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY
Lockport, Illinois
CO-EDUCATIONAL

A Catholic college administered and staffed by Catholic laymen. CYO affiliated. State and University accredited. Majors offered in Liberal Arts, Natural Sciences, Business Administration, Social Sciences, Industrial Arts, Engineering. B.A., B.S. degrees. One and two year courses in Flight, including Helicopter, Aviation Operations, Maintenance. 35 miles from Chicago.

CAMP WE-HA-KEE On Green Bay Marinette, Wisconsin
For Girls 6-16
Conducted by Dominican Sisters, Sinsinawa, Wis.
1955 Season June 28—August 16, $350
For information write
Sister David O'Leary, 200 Ridge Ave., Winnetka, Ill.

The Commonweal
makes an appropriate and highly welcome
Graduation or Ordination Gift
$7.50 for a year's subscription

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Canadians is a reflection of those past days which account, in a way, for that "basic loneliness and insecurity" alluded to by the author.

In well-documented chapters Mason Wade leads us through the maze of politics in French Canada, from the days of New France, through the conquest by England, to the emergence of a nation and its growing-pains. The continuing struggle between Canadian nationalism and British imperialism is well told; also the bitter disputes resulting from the rights of the French language. One of the most interesting chapters—to this reviewer, at any rate—deals with the events surrounding the Riel uprising of 1869-70. Louis Riel, like his father, was a leader of the *Métis* (half-breeds) and enjoyed great popularity among his people, but his disturbing political and religious activities led a whole generation in Quebec to be filled with emotional hatred of all things English while the gallophobia and 'no-popery' agitation aroused in Ontario further complicated an already explosive situation.

The conscription crisis of 1916-19 is also well told and, here again, the author's fair evaluation of all phases of this conflict helps to clarify this crisis and place events in their proper perspective. Another cause of conflict came from the industrialization tendencies of recent decades when foreigners of another language and race had taken over most of French Canada's patrimony of natural resources, leaving only agriculture to the natives who, unfortunately and in desperation, left their fields to become rootless proletarians in the cities. In the chapter on "Industrialization and Laurentianism 1920-39" Mason Wade affords an insight into the literature and artistic activity of the times. It is a subject I wish he could have developed a bit further.

When we come to a consideration of the events of World War II we find that French Canadians were determined to act as North Americans, an attitude which both British and De Gaullist propagandists underestimated. It is this attitude that is a harbinger for the future and which can lead to an end of isolationism and to the evolution of a social order incorporating what the outside world has to offer with the best of the French Canadian tradition.

CHRISTMAS CARDS
FOR FUND RAISING

Personalized cards, box assortments and notepaper.

Full Discounts. All cards religious in spirit, beautifully printed and tastefully designed.

For free portfolio, send the name of your organization to: Dept. C

BERLINER & McGINNIS
Nevada City, California

God's Work

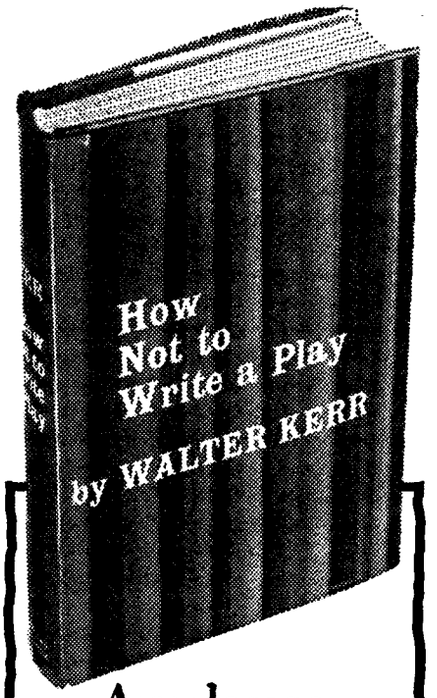
GOD'S MEN OF COLOR. By Albert S. Foley, S.J. Farrar, Straus. $4.50.

By MARJORIE CROWE HUGHES

WITH distinguished scholarship and a gently glowing enthusiasm, Father Foley has told, in this book, a little known but fascinating part of the history of the Church in America.

Within the last hundred years colored Catholic Americans have given the Church seventy-two priests. It seems a small number. But considering, as Father Foley points out, the condition of the majority of Negroes during those years, it is a very large number. And considering further the perseverance with which the seventy-two overcame mountainous obstacles and heart-rending humiliations to follow their vocations, it is an astonishing number, and one that is steadily increasing.

Their stories are vividly presented here. The book opens with the life of Bishop Augustine Healy, the first colored priest and prelate in the United States. He and his two distinguished brothers, also priests, were born into slavery on a plantation in Georgia. Their struggles and achievements are told with warmth and understanding, as is the case



Applause for a critic

WALTER KERR, distinguished drama critic of the *New York Herald Tribune,* has written his long-awaited first book. In its witty and authoritative pages, Mr. Kerr casts a cold eye on the forces that have been undermining the theater — i.e., the playwrights — and proposes some brilliant recommendations for their reform. How persuasive he has been may be judged by these first reviews:

"Mr. Kerr speaks with authority and not as a stranger. He loves the theater and because he loves it he chides it. And since he feels strongly and commands a fine flow of words, he chides with fire and fury, with wit and wisdom. 'How Not to Write a Play' is pungent, pointed and controversial." —ORVILLE PRESCOTT, N. Y. Times.

"Mr. Kerr has a sensational remedy, following a diagnosis as brave as it is exhilarating." — JOHN K. HUTCHENS, N. Y. Herald Tribune Book Review.

"Mr. Kerr pours the heat on. Every American playwright and everyone who hopes to be a playwright ought to read this volume. For here is a ringing voice. Here is a challenging voice." —PAUL GREEN, N.Y. Times Book Review.

HOW NOT TO WRITE A PLAY
By WALTER KERR
$3.50 at all bookstores
Simon and Schuster

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our Approach, II

"The Commonweal is in some ways pessimistic. It disbelieves in the possibility of a perfect political order, laws, governments, or human institutions. It views with alarm those prophets who promise a straight road to utopia. It believes that man's constant struggle is to hold his own, to keep his society from reverting to barbarism. It sees Original Sin as the first fact to be dealt with in human experience.

"The Commonweal is in other ways optimistic. It thinks that human society, though it can never be perfect, can, through constant effort, be made decent and kept civilized. It believes that history is non-determined, that man is not 'fated' to accomplish his own destruction, that through trial and error, through reason and learning, through suffering when needs be, man can find a *modus vivendi*. It looks to the Resurrection of the Dead on the final day of the human race.

"Here and now, therefore, with Original Sin at his start and resurrection from the dead at his end, man must deal with his tractable, unpredictable, forever imperfect present. And in dealing with it he must use the only weapons he has been given—intelligence, patience, tolerance, the art of compromise. He must take the lessons he has learned from any source—from Revelation, from history, from experience—and use them to form the basis for a habitable society."

(from the Thirtieth Anniversary Issue)

——————Special Introductory Offer——————

15 Issues for $2

THE COMMONWEAL, 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

Enclosed is $2.00. Please send the next 15 issues to:

Name .....

Address .....

City .....

6/24/55

indeed with all the life histories in this book down to the most recent and modest of the newly ordained.

It is sad that the author must stress over and over what should be taken for granted: the spiritual, mental and cultural stature of these men of God. Prejudice makes it necessary, no doubt. It is interesting to note, however, that once ordained, the colored priests won a much greater measure of matter-of-fact acceptance in their ministry to both colored and white Catholics than seems to have been expected. May their victory hasten the day when color will no longer be considered significant in a priest.

Self-Portrait

THE SELECTED LETTERS OF ANTON CHEKHOV. Edited by Lillian Hellman. Translated by Sidonie E. Lederer. Farrar, Straus. $4.

By HENRY POPKIN

SPREAD before us in these letters is the irreproachable life of Anton Chekhov, whose success story is a model and might even be set to music, to the tune of "Davy Crockett." Chekhov worked his way up from the direst poverty, was good to his family, advocated freedom for the artist, and championed Dreyfus and Zola. Befriended by Tolstoy—the literary giant of the previous generation—in his turn he befriended the nearest-to-a-giant produced by the next generation—Gorki. To an enviable career as a writer of fiction he added success as a dramatist and climactically, married his leading lady. But the person dimly revealed in the letters is much more complex than an Alger hero.

For his own defense, Chekhov erected a wall of wit and objectivity that concealed him from the world. This structure is more easily described than explained, but there may be a clue in Chekhov's sharp criticism of his brother Nikolai, who bore more of the marks of their plebeian origin: "You have only one failing . . . your utter lack of culture." The carefully nurtured reti-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cence becomes finally a quality of the soul, to be observed as much in the letters as in the *sec* tone of the stories and in the baffling objectivity of the plays, that wonderful objectivity which has inflamed so many subjective critics. (Miss Hellman is no exception.)

Chekhov himself is never inflamed; he never insists. In stories and plays he omits the pointers that would indicate his personal attitude toward characters and incidents. He does something of the sort in his correspondence, where he likes to wrap things up in wry little jokes. His reference to Ibsen as "my favorite author, you know" is one of these private jokes; we have ample evidence of his disdain for Ibsen. He exhibits a curious, bantering, insulting tone toward his brother Alexander; it is accounted for not only by the underlying affection Miss Hellman mentions but also by the fact that Alexander was a dipsomaniac whose weakness deeply troubled Chekhov.

Characteristically, he deplores a vulgar advertisement of one of his stories and later tries to dissuade Gorki from dedicating a novel to him. His advice to the Moscow Art Theatre is in keeping with everything else: "Suffering should be expressed as it is expressed in life itself, not by action of arms and legs, but by a tone of voice, or a glance; not by gesticulation, but by a graceful movement." His letters, stories, and plays abound in expressive, graceful movements.

Chekhov enjoys the human scene, but he is not a vigorous participant in it. His tone when he writes his wife suggests more a perception of feeling than an expression of it. Writing his sister, whom he deeply loved, he is mainly concerned to be informative. When he expresses indignation, he needs to be directly confronted with the object of his complaint. His bitter comments on the poverty of Siberia and the distress of the prison island of Sakhalin belong to his descriptions of these places and not to any omnipresent concern with social injustice. His liberal leanings did not force him to break with his reactionary publisher until he was in Paris at the time of Zola's trial. It was necessary for him to be on the scene and to be faced with an issue he could not ignore.

Chekhov lived his stories but not in the usual sense of the phrase. He lived their tone, not their incidents. He lived their irony, their reticence, and he found in irony and reticence the perfect tools of art.

Classified

★RATES, payable in advance: 16⅔c a word (6 words, $1). Centered lines $1 each. 12 words or 2 lines minimum. Discounts: 5% for 3 times, 10% for 7 times, 15% for 13 times.

IRISH BOOKS AND GIFTS

★ Books, Linens, Gifts, *Catalogs.* IRISH INDUSTRIES DEPOT INC. 870 Lexington Ave., (near 65th), New York

VACATIONS

★$10 entitles YOU—the working girl—to a Do-It-Yourself Weekend at SUGAR PINES, Putnam Valley, N.Y.—Young Christian Workers' Summer Camp. Contact: IRENE WIZOREK, ORegon 7-5000 (N.Y.), Ext. 284, 9:30 to 4 P.M.

POSITION WANTED

★ Woman, 41, varied work experience, seeks job as research secretary or administrative assistant. If interested write: STRINGFELLOW BARR, Box 79, Charlottesville, Va.

SUMMER POSITIONS WANTED

★FOREIGN STUDENTS. Men and women, college age. *Family service helpers, clerical, office boys, waiters and waitresses, etc.* In or near New York City. Available immediately through Labor Day. For one or more jobs call Victoria Jadez, GRAIL INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CENTER, 370 Riverside Drive, N.Y. 25. RIverside 9-1620.

Commonweal

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

One Year $7.50

Two or more years (or two or more one-year subscriptions) $6.50 each

REVIEWERS

Vivian Mercier is co-editor of *1,000 Years of Irish Prose.*

Maurice Lavanoux is secretary of the Liturgical Arts Society and managing editor of *Liturgical Arts* magazine.

Marjorie Crowe Hughes was for many years associated with the Catholic Worker movement in New York.

Henry Popkin teaches English at Brandeis University and is a contributor to the *Kenyon Review, Sewanee Review, New Republic,* and *Commentary.*

Educational

KANSAS

St. Benedict's College

Atchison, Kansas. A Catholic College for men conducted by the Benedictine Fathers. A Liberal Arts College, accredited by the North Central Association. Located fifty miles northwest of Kansas City, Missouri, on the Missouri River. Address Registrar for information.

NEW JERSEY

Georgian Court College

Four-year course leading to B.A. and B.S. degrees provides a solid background of general culture and special training in one particular field. Well-integrated program in Liberal Arts, Fine Arts, Science, Music, Home Economics, Business Administration. Teacher Training. Fully accredited. Address Secretary. Lakewood, N. J.

NEW YORK

Nazareth College

Rochester 18, N. Y. Conducted by Sisters of St. Joseph. B.A. and B.S. Degrees. Liberal Arts — Science — Education — Art — Music — Speech and Dramatics — Secretarial Science — Social Service — Nursing — Medical Technology.

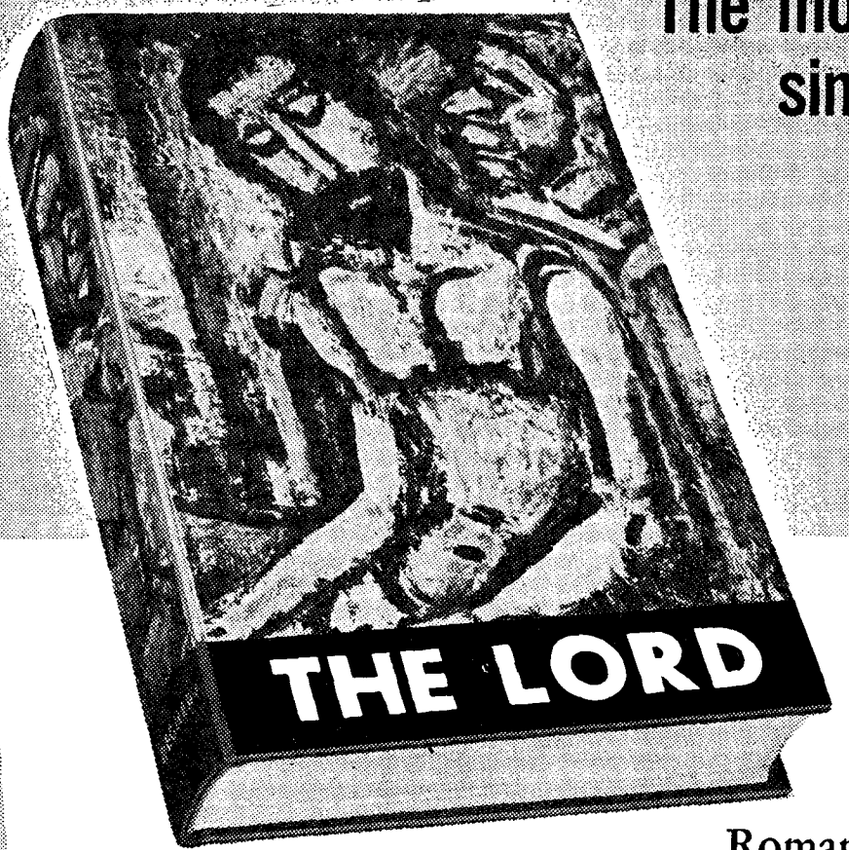
DELAWARE

Archmere Academy

Accredited boys' preparatory school under Norbertine Canons. High school only. Resident and day students. Small classes, limited enrollment. Magnificent main building set in spacious 48-acre campus overlooking the Delaware River. Public speaking, music, social activities. Moral and spiritual guidance. Located at Claymont, Delaware, 21 miles south of Philadelphia. Complete sports program, well equipped gymnasium and athletic fields. Early application advised. Catalog. Very Reverend Headmaster, Box 67-H, Claymont, Del.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The most important single book yet published on the life and teachings of Christ



3rd Printing

"A masterpiece"— *Commonweal*

"Undoubted treasure"— *America*

Price $6.50

Romano Guardini's

THE LORD

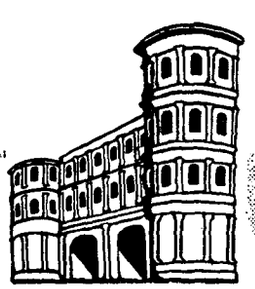
Thomas More Books to Live

Permanent Catholic Classics

"Inspired"— Rev. John S. Kennedy, *Catholic Transcript*
"To be congratulated"— *Brooklyn Tablet*
"Unbelievable . . . makes a reviewer's heart glow a bit"— Rev. Richard Walsh, *Montana Catholic Register*
"A series increasing in value and distinction with each new title"— *Michigan Catholic*
"Fine Catholic classics"— *The Christian Family*

Titles in the Series:

WEEPING CROSS *by Henry Longan Stuart*.....$4.00
CAIN *by Rogier van Aerde*.....$3.75
THE PATH TO ROME *by Hilaire Belloc*.....$3.75
SUPERSTITION CORNER *by Sheila Kaye-Smith*.....$3.75
LETTERS FROM BARON FRIEDRICH VON HUGEL TO A NIECE *edited by Gwendolyn Greene, with an introduction by Rev. John B. Sheerin, C.S.P.*.....$3.75



HENRY REGNERY COMPANY · Chicago 4

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED